

# Ark<sup>®</sup> NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the Summer 2025 Newsletter

These are some things you will read in this newsletter:



- ▶ Ark has a new Care and Support team called the Practice Development Team.

- ▶ Ark has a new way of communicating with tenants called CX Feedback.



- ▶ Ark will spend our money keep your energy bills as low as possible.



- ▶ You can read more about the new homes we are building.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter. Please tell us what you think.



Enjoy your summer. The next newsletter will be ready in the Autumn.



## Become a member of Ark



It is important that Ark have a lot of members.



Being an Ark member means you can go to the Ark Annual General Meetings and you can vote at them.



If you are interested in becoming a member of Ark, please send an email to **[admin@arkha.org.uk](mailto:admin@arkha.org.uk)** and we will send you more information.

## Equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights at Ark



Being fair and kind to everyone is very important to us in Ark.

Ark has a group called the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Group. They are called the EDIHR Group for short.



This group meets once a month.

The EDIHR Group helps Ark make sure everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

## Practice Development Team

The Practice Development Team is a new team in Ark.



The Practice Development Team has 3 Practice Leaders. They are Zoe Keir, Ellis Bruce and Jonny Smith.

Calum Robson is the Practice Development Manager and he is the leader of the team.



The team are like coaches for Ark's care and support staff. They give them training and help them to use something called Positive Behaviour Support.



Positive Behaviour Support is a way that we work in Ark to help us understand how people need to be supported to have a good life.

# Participation

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## Speak Out

**Forfar's Speak Out Group met up in January to set goals for the new year.**



They have a goal to invite a police officer to one of their meetings, so they can learn about staying safe in the community.

They also set a goal to have some fun this year by having a summer party, a games night and doing a steps challenge.

Good luck Forfar!

## Forres Speak Out Group



Forres Speak Out Group had their first meeting with their new Speak Out Worker Ellie and it was a huge success!

The group talked about keeping safe online and avoiding scams.

They also set some New Year's Resolutions this year to "do more for myself", "go more places on my own" and "start walking more".

## Dunfermline's Speak Out Group



The Speak Out members in Dunfermline had a healthy kick start to the new year with some chair yoga and talking about healthy eating.

They are working on creating their own healthy cookbook filled with their favourite meals.



The group celebrated Valentine's Day with arts and crafts. They made keyrings, cards and Love Bugs – and enjoyed some chocolate strawberries and love hearts.

## Grangemouth Speak Out Group



Grangemouth Speak Out Group have started a Neighbourhood Watch.

They also visited their local sports centre to check out the space for their future meetings.



## Hawick's Speak Out Group



Hawick's Speak Out Group is back up and running with their new Speak Out Worker, Bethany! The group had their first meeting in March. They invited Ark's Participation Officer, Jamila, to talk to them about different ways they can get involved in Ark. The first thing the group decided to do was start having a meal together once a month.

## Ark Voices Group



Since the last edition of the newsletter, the Ark Voices Group have had 3 meetings.



Their September meeting was held in Ark's new Head Office.

Neil Armstrong, Ark's Assistant Director of Care and Support joined the meeting and told everyone about some plans for Care and Support.



The group met again in December online. Calum Robson joined the meeting to tell us about the new Practice Development Team.



The group had their first meeting outside of Edinburgh in March. The meeting was in the Great Scottish Tapestry Museum in Galashiels. Some new faces from Ark's services in the borders came to their first Voices meeting!

## Fee tells us about the Ark Voices Group



"I have been a member of the Ark Voices Group for quite a few years. When I started going, we had the meetings in the old office at the Priory.



I like going to the Voices Group meetings because you meet different service users from different parts of Scotland. I like to see some old faces as well.



It's good because you can find out all about what's going on with Ark. I really enjoy meeting the people who come to speak to us from other organisations, like the National Involvement Network. And I enjoy playing Bingo as well.



If someone is thinking about joining the Voices Group, they can come along and try it. They don't have to speak in front of everyone, they can just listen and have a chat with the other members."



## Squirell spotting in Forar



Supported people in Forfar put out peanuts to attract red squirrels. Supported person Mel Niven patiently waited to capture the perfect shot – and it paid off! Mel is proud of her photos and is excited to share them for the newsletter.





# Housing & Assets

## CX Feedback



Ark has a new way to talk to tenants called CX Feedback.



It lets us share important information and ask for feedback from tenants using texts and emails.



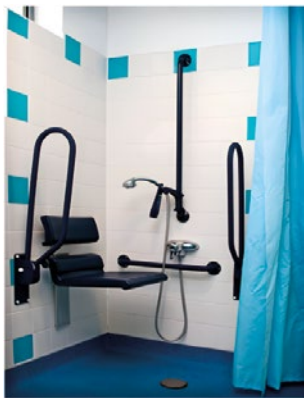
If you are a tenant, you might get text messages or emails from CX Feedback.



If you have any questions about CX Feedback, please contact our customer services team at **0131 478 8143** or email them at **[customer.services@arkha.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@arkha.org.uk)**

## 2025/2026 Planned Investment Programme

Ark is going to replace these things for our tenants:



- ▶ Bathrooms in Oxfangs Bank, Edinburgh



- ▶ Front and Back Doors in Bracken Road, Portlethen, Aberdeenshire



- ▶ Windows in Bracken Road, Portlethen, Aberdeenshire



- ▶ Kitchens in Southhouse Broadway, Edinburgh

## Whole House Energy Efficiency Upgrades



Ark is going to do work to make our homes better, so that they use less energy. This will help our tenants have lower energy bills.

This means we will put things like insulation and smart heating controls in our houses.

The work is planned to start in May 2025 and the first place we will work on is Bracken Road in Portlethen in Aberdeenshire.

## Keeping Your Home Safe When You Charge Your e-bike or e-scooter



Sometimes fires can start when people charge the batteries in their e-bikes and e-scooters.

You can do some things to stay safe from fire when you charge your e-bike or e-scooter:

- ▶ Allow batteries to cool down before charging them again
- ▶ Charge the batteries on a hard, flat surface



- ▶ Do not use a damaged battery
- ▶ Keep batteries away from very hot places or very cold places
- ▶ Always follow the instructions for charging
- ▶ Always unplug your charger when it's finished charging
- ▶ Don't block any exits with your e-bike or e-scooter
- ▶ Don't charge it when you are asleep or out
- ▶ Make sure you have an escape plan in case there is a fire
- ▶ Put smoke alarms where you charge your batteries



## Universal Credit Migration



The DWP are stopping 6 benefits and replacing them with Universal Credit.

The benefits they are stopping are:



▶ Working tax credit



▶ Child tax credit



▶ Housing benefit



▶ Income support



▶ Income-based job seekers allowance



▶ Employment and support allowance (ESA)



If you get any of these benefits, you will get a letter called a Migration Notice.

When this happens, you need to make a claim for universal credit.



You can make your universal credit claim by visiting **[www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk](http://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk)**

If you have any problems with claiming universal credit, you can phone the DWP on **0800 328 5644**.



You can also phone Citizens Advice Scotland on **0800 023 2581** and ask for help to claim.

Universal credit will ask for information on your housing costs. If you do not know this information, please contact us.

You can ask for your housing costs to be paid directly to your rent account or be paid to you.



The first payment is usually paid to you, and you will have to contact us to make your rent payment.

If you want to check what benefits you should be on, you can use the website **[www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)**



At Ark, we want our tenants to have good quality homes in communities that are tidy and safe.



Our Housing and Neighbourhood Services Officers help make sure this happens. They are called HNSOs for short.



Tenants are visited every year by their HNSO, so they can talk about any issues they are having in their home.



HNSOs also do estate walkabouts. Estate walkabouts are when the HNSO walks around the neighbourhood where our tenants live and check for problems so they can be fixed.



Your HNSO is there to help you. Please contact them if you would like to speak to them.

Here is a list of places we will visit in the next 2 months:

**June 2025**

- ▶ Livingston
- ▶ Dunfermline
- ▶ Lochgelly
- ▶ Glenrothes
- ▶ Uphall
- ▶ Linlithgow
- ▶ Grangemouth
- ▶ Alloa
- ▶ Perth
- ▶ Blairgowrie
- ▶ Arbroath
- ▶ Edinburgh Developments

Here is a list of places we will do Annual House Visits in the next 2 months:

**June 2025**

- ▶ Livingston
- ▶ St Andrews
- ▶ Grangemouth
- ▶ Glenrothes

**July 2025**

- ▶ St Andrew's
- ▶ Glenrothes





# Rent Consultation



In December 2024, we sent questionnaires to our tenants or their guardians.



The questionnaire asked people what they thought about Ark's plans for charging more rent in 2025 and 2026.

We asked about 2 options – charging 4% more rent or charging 5% more rent.



More tenants said they wanted Ark to charge 4% more rent. Ark's board of management agreed that Ark would charge 4% more rent.



Everyone who answered the questionnaire was entered into a prize draw for the chance to win a £50 Tesco voucher.

The 4 winners live in Edinburgh, Forres, Fraserburgh and Macduff.

Congratulations to the winners!

# New Build

## Windsor Square



In the last newsletter, we told you we started building 12 new homes in Penicuik.

The work is going well and we hope they will all be ready by August 2025.

Here is a picture of the new homes being built!



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# Right to Repair

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There is a law called the Right to Repair Housing (Scotland) Act.



It says that tenants must have some types of repairs done in a certain amount of time.



The next page has is a list of the different types of repair and when they must be done.

**These things should be fixed in 1 day:**

- ▶ Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- ▶ Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks, or toilet pans (no other toilet)
- ▶ Blocked sink, bath or basin
- ▶ Loss of electric power
- ▶ Insecure external window, door or lock
- ▶ Unsafe access path or step
- ▶ Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns
- ▶ Loss or partial loss of gas supply
- ▶ Loss or partial loss of space or water heating (no alternative heating)
- ▶ Toilet not flushing (no other toilet in the house)
- ▶ Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting
- ▶ Loss of water supply

**These things should be fixed in 3 days:**

- ▶ Partial loss of electric power
- ▶ Partial loss of water supply
- ▶ Loose or detached banister or handrail
- ▶ Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads

**These things should be fixed in 7 days:**

- ▶ Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working



## Time to Upgrade your Electricity Meter



**Important: Old meters will stop working in June 2025**

You might have a special meter that gives you cheaper electricity at night.

These meters use something called RTS – that stands for Radio Teleswitch Service.



RTS meters were made a long time ago. They help control things like heating and hot water at different times of day.



**RTS is ending soon**

RTS will stop working on 30th of June 2025.



That means your electricity supplier needs to change your meter to a smart meter.

## What should you do now?



1. Contact your electricity supplier (their name and number will be on your bill)



2. Ask if you have an RTS meter



3. If yes, book an upgrade to a smart meter

In some places, upgrades are not ready yet. But your supplier will let you know when it's time.

# Complaints

## July to September 2024



From July to September, we received 16 complaints.



This is 4 more complaints than we got in the few months before.



10 complaints were stage 2.

Stage 2 complaints are for when people want an investigation about their complaint.



We answered almost all these complaints on time.



Altogether we found 14 problems in these complaints.

## October to December 2024



Ark got 24 complaints in October to December.



This is more than the few months before.



8 of the complaints were Stage 2. Stage 2 complaints are for when people want an investigation about their complaint.



We found 39 problems in these complaints.



We answered all of these complaints on time.